

# North Carolina Air National Guard

## TGIF News

Volume 2003, Issue 13, August 1, 2003

(The Guard is Family)



### THINKING OUTSIDE OF THE "BOX"

This is the monthly segment that includes suggestions for alternatives to watching television. Television cuts into family time, affects our children's ability to read and succeed in school, and contributes to unhealthy lifestyles and obesity. Here are just a few of the facts:

- On average, children in the US will spend more time in front of the television (1,023 hours) than in school this year (900 hours).
- Forty percent of Americans frequently or always watch television during dinner.

### Contents

Thinking Outside  
of the Box

Mobilized Reservists  
are Securing  
"Veteran Status"

Pentagon Joint Family  
Assistance Center  
After Action

The USPS Introduces  
NETPOST

Transitional Health  
Care for Reserve,  
Guard and Active Duty

Updated Transitional  
Health Care  
Fact Sheet

New Hours for  
TRICARE Info Call  
Center

Internet Info - Reunion  
and Healthcare

Family Readiness  
Charter/Mission

As the former US Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher said at the Kick Off of TV-Turnoff Week 2001, "We are raising the most overweight generation of youngsters in American history. This week is about saving lives." Turning off the television gives us a chance to think, read, create, and do. It also gives us the opportunity to connect with our families and engage in our communities. So turn off TV and turn on life!!

- **Real World Half-Hour:** Take a moment to spend quiet time with your family. Start your day by preparing breakfast together or end it by making dinner.
- **A Young and Restful Hour:** Try to exercise for 20 to 30 minutes, preferably a few hours before bedtime. Studies show that regular physical activity helps sleep!
- **Entertain Yourself Tonight:** Plan a Family Game Night and play or create board games, read chapters of your favorite book or a deck of Uno® cards. Involve your children and their friends.
- **One Life to Live Healthy:** Including physical activity in your daily schedule doesn't need to be difficult. Take the steps instead of the elevator, mow your lawn, play with your dog for 20 to 30 minutes a day!
- **TV Free Week:** Now that you've saved more than 24 hours in personal time, do something fun for yourself like a manicure and pedicure. Pick up a new book, take a class or visit a relative or friend.

You can learn more about this campaign by going to: [www.tvturnoff.org/](http://www.tvturnoff.org/).

## MILITARY UPDATE: Mobilized Reservists Are Securing 'Veteran' Status

by Tom Philpott, 7/11/2003

For many first-time activated Reservists in the war on terrorism, there is a silver lining behind the cloud of a long, disruptive, and often dangerous mobilization. The call-up will ensure their status as "veterans" and their eligibility for a full range of benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. A fact still not well known among Reservists and National Guard personnel is that those who first entered service after Sept. 7, 1980, which includes many of 294,000 members mobilized since 9/11, face a higher threshold than previous generations to qualify for VA health care benefits. The impact of this change is only now becoming clear to some Selected Reservists and National Guardsmen completing careers that followed a once-traditional path. That is, they did their initial training, attended monthly drills, and spent enough time on active duty for training to earn 20 "good" years of Reserve service. Now they can retire and, at age 60, will begin receiving a Reserve retirement check.

But as they investigate VA benefits, some Reserve retirees are surprised to learn they are not "veterans." Others discover that they have only limited veteran status by virtue of minimal active service, but are ineligible for a full range of VA benefits.

To gain full veteran status, including eligibility for VA health care, Reservists who entered the military after Sept. 7, 1980 must serve 24 continuous months of active service or be called to active duty under a federal mobilization order like the one President Bush signed after 9/11.

William West, a benefits expert at the VA, said that minimum active-duty requirements impact eligibility for VA benefits, including guaranteed home loans and education benefits. But today, thanks to easing by Congress, the 24-month rule only impacts VA health care.

And thanks to the massive call-up over the last two years, the biggest since World War II, many Reserve and National Guard members are earning full veteran status through their mobilization, thus avoiding benefit disappointments that have touched some retiring colleagues.

In 2000, the VA adopted a broader definition of "veteran" for data collection to try to get give a more precise picture of the overall veteran population. This broader definition included 1.1 million separated Reservists who failed to meet the 24-month rule on VA health care eligibility. They comprised only 4.4 percent of 25.5 million veteran population overall, but a large percentage of younger veterans.

For example, as of Sept. 30, 2000, no measurable percentage of veterans older than 55 was affected by the 24-month rule. Most entered service before the 1980 date. Among 3.2 million veterans age 50 to 54, only a tenth of one percent were ineligible for VA health care because they had less than 2 years of continuous active service. The VA calls this group the "L2s." The number and proportion of L2s rose sharply as ages fell. Among 754,000 veterans age 25 to 29, more than 31 percent had less than the required 2 years of continuous active service. Among 264,000 veterans age 20 to 24, more than half, 51 percent, were L2s.

If these veterans never serve 24 straight months on active duty, or if they aren't mobilized by federal authorities, VA health care won't be an option. In that light, the massive call-up over the last two years would appear to be reversing that trend, ensuring that many more Reserve and National Guard members earn full veteran status.

The call-up affects other VA benefits. For example, it accelerates a Reservists' eligibility for VA-guaranteed home loans. Typically, the home loan benefit is available to Reservists only after they serve 6 years in the Selected Reserve or National Guard; they also need an honorable discharge. Members called to active duty don't have to complete the 6 years of drill to gain VA home loan eligibility.

A call-up also affects eligibility for: 1) VA disability pensions, an important benefit for veterans who fall on hard times; 2) a death pension for low-income widows and dependents; and 3) education benefits for spouses and children of veterans with permanent disability ratings of 100 percent.

Not all mobilizations affect VA benefits. To do that it must be “federal,” that is, ordered by the president. If a state governor calls up the National Guard, for example, to fight a fire or protect an airport, it does not impact veteran status.

The rule of thumb for VA benefits of Selected Reservists and National Guard members serving on active duty is that they can earn the same benefits as other veterans if they meet the same length-of-service requirements.

Reservists who haven’t served on active duty receive fewer benefits but they aren’t shut out by any measure. For example, they do get medical care for service-connected disabilities, VA compensation for injuries that occur while on active or inactive duty for training and Montgomery GI Bill for Selected Reserves.

Readers can find a robust list of VA benefit fact sheets online at: [www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Milsvc/benefacts.htm](http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Milsvc/benefacts.htm).

---

## **PENTAGON JOINT FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER AFTER ACTION**

Following the September 11th tragedy, in a hotel located close to the Pentagon, the Pentagon Joint Family Assistance Center was created. The web link below takes you to the After Action Report of the center that details what those involved learned from the experience of helping families in a crisis. It contains valuable and useful information that can be applied in many situations of different types of crisis. Our 145th AW Family Readiness Office has a copy of the After Action Report if you would like to read it.

Link to the Pentagon Family Assistance Center After Action:  
[http://www.mfrc-dodqol.org/Enduring\\_Freedom/pfacrpt.htm](http://www.mfrc-dodqol.org/Enduring_Freedom/pfacrpt.htm)

---

## **The USPS Introduces NETPOST**

The United States Postal Service now offers a new NETPOST service. The new online service allows patrons to send regular mail by creating it, paying for it and mailing it online. If you submit your letter to the USPS by 1400 it will be in the mail system the next day. It will be printed at one of the four National Print Sites (New York City, NY., Chicago, IL., Orlando, FL., and Oakland, CA) and entered into the USPS system.

When creating your letter, card, or postcard you can import word documents, images, or pictures to your letter, card, or postcards. There is no minimum or maximum quantity that you have to mail. Before the USPS will print and mail your letter you must pay for it by using a credit card. With the postcard option you can buy groups of postcards in advance and the amount will be shown in your account. Each time you send a postcard it will be subtracted from your balance on hand.

Patrons can use NETPOST speed letters and postcards to the addressee.  
<http://www.usps.com/netpost/>

## TRICARE

Important  
Telephone Numbers

**TRICARE FOR LIFE**  
1-888-363-5433

**PHARMACY**  
1-877-363-6337

**NATIONAL MAIL  
ORDER PHARMACY**  
1-800-903-4680

**TRICARE  
PRIME REMOTE**  
1-800-931-9501

**TRICARE DENTAL**  
1-888-622-2256 (Enrollment)  
1-800-866-8499 (Information)

**REGION 1  
NORTH EAST**  
1-888-999-5195

**REGION 2  
MID - ATLANTIC**  
1-800-931-9501

**REGION 3  
SOUTHEAST**  
1-800-444-5445

**REGION 4  
GULF SOUTH**  
1-800-444-5445

**REGION 5  
HEARTLAND**  
1-800-941-4501

**REGION 6  
SOUTHWEST**  
1-800-406-2832

**REGION 7/8  
CENTRAL**  
1-888-874-9378

**REGION 9  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**  
1-800-242-6788

**REGION 10  
GOLDEN GATE**  
1-800-242-6788

**REGION 11  
NORTHWEST**  
1-800-404-2042

**ALASKA & HAWAII**  
1-800-242-6788

## Transitional Health Care for Reserve, Guard and Active Duty

If you are a National Guardsman or an Activated Reservist ordered to active duty for more than 30 days in support of a contingency operation; or an active duty service member separating from service who belongs to one of four applicable categories, such as

Stop-Loss or involuntary separation, you and your covered family members may be eligible for benefits under the Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP). TAMP provides health care coverage for you and your eligible family members as you transition back to civilian life. TRICARE has provided a fact sheet on TAMP which can be found here:

[http://www.military.com/Resources/ResourceFileView/MR\\_Transition\\_070603.pdf](http://www.military.com/Resources/ResourceFileView/MR_Transition_070603.pdf)

## TRICARE LITTLE KNOWN FACTS: Maternity Care

If you become pregnant, TRICARE helps pay for the maternity care you will need. This covers pregnancy, delivery, and up to 6 weeks of newborn care.

If an active duty member is discharged from the service while his wife is pregnant, TRICARE does not cover any maternity care after the day of discharge from the military unless the family qualifies for the Transitional Assistance Management Program or has enrolled in the Continued Health Care Benefit Program (CHCBP), which extends eligibility for health care benefits similar to TRICARE Standard for a certain period after TRICARE eligibility ends.

Medical care for your baby is paid as part of your maternity care for the first 3 days. After 3 days, the baby could begin separate cost-sharing as an individual at the normal rate.

Under maternity care, well-baby and well-child care are extended benefits for children from birth up to age 6, when services are provided by the attending pediatrician, certified nurse practitioner, or certified physician assistant. Some of the extended benefits include routine newborn care, health supervision examinations, routine immunizations, periodic health screening, and developmental assessment in accordance with American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines.

For more information, please visit Chapter 10 "What's Covered - Maternity Care" in the TRICARE Handbook: <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/tricarehandbook/results.cfm?tn=17&cn=10>



## Updated Transitional Health Care Fact Sheet

The Transitional Health Care Benefit fact sheet has been updated with the changes to the second paragraph under TRICARE Prime Enrollment and Reenrollment.

The fact sheet may be accessed at the following link:

[http://www.tricare.osd.mil/factsheets/index.cfm?fx=shows&file\\_name=Transitional%20Health%20Care%20Fact%20Sheet](http://www.tricare.osd.mil/factsheets/index.cfm?fx=shows&file_name=Transitional%20Health%20Care%20Fact%20Sheet)

## New Hours for Tricare Information Call Center

Effective **July 1, 2003**, the TRICARE Information Call Center (TIC) will have new hours of operation.

The new hours are:

**Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Eastern time** (excluding federal holidays).  
(Please be aware that all calls are answered in English only.)

TRICARE Management Activity National Toll-Free Numbers are:

**TRICARE Prime Remote (TPR)**

**1-888-DoD-CARE (1-888-363-2273)**

(active duty and family members)

**Senior Pharmacy Program**

**1-877-DoD-MEDS (1-877-363-6337)**

**TRICARE For Life**

**1-888-DoD-LIFE (1-888-363-5433)**

**TRICARE Online**

**1-866-DoD-EWEB (1-866-363-3932)**

**HIPAA**

**1-888-DoD-HIPA (1-888-363-4472)**

---

## INTERNET INFO—Reunion and Healthcare Brochures

Visit the following links for helpful info:

·"Coming Home"—

a brochure for the spouses of soldiers returning from deployment

[http://www.mfri.purdue.edu/pages/military/SPOUSES\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.mfri.purdue.edu/pages/military/SPOUSES_1_.pdf)

·Healthcare Benefits for Reserve Component Members—a brochure outlining transitional healthcare including continuance of employer's health insurance

<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/RNGOLBrochure/employer.cfm>

## *Family Readiness Air Guard Expanded Executive Council*

Fisk Outwater - Chairman  
Kathleen Flaherty  
Terry Henderson  
Janice Richardson  
Deborah Dunlap - Recognition Committee  
Martha Pasour - Youth Committee  
Sarah Spivey - Youth Committee

### Family Readiness office telephone numbers

- " 1-800-354-6943 Ext. 4949
- " Cell Phone: 980-721-4019

The fastest way to get in touch with FR is now through the cell phone or pager, someone will answer or get back in touch with you as quickly as possible

### Emergency contact calls:

- " Pager: 1-800-250-4181

*Uniting Our Air Guard  
One Family at a Time*



**Family Readiness**  
5225 Morris Field Drive  
Charlotte, NC 28208

Phone: 1-800-354-6943 Ext 4949  
Cell Phone: 980-721-4019

**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**  
[www.ncchar.ang.af.mil](http://www.ncchar.ang.af.mil)

## **Family Readiness**

### **Charter**

Develop a program to provide information, on-going education, and assistance to families, members, and leadership aimed at preparing military members and their families for National Guard Military Life

### **Mission**

Educate, Support, Assist, Communicate, Collaborate, and Sustain